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Environment and sustainable development: International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

Report of the Second Committee*

Rapporteur: Mr. Walid A. **Al-Hadid** (Jordan)

I. Introduction

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 87 (see A/57/532, para. 2). Action on sub-item (b) was taken at the 20th, 40th, 42nd and 44th meetings, on 30 October and 4, 10 and 11 December 2002. An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/57/SR.20, 40, 42 and 44).

II. Consideration of proposals

A. Draft resolutions A/C.2/57/L.16 and A/C.2/57/L.54

2. At the 20th meeting, on 30 October, the representative of Venezuela, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "International cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon" (A/C.2/57/L.16), which read:

> "*The General Assembly*,
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> "*Recalling* its resolutions 52/200 of 18 December 1997, 53/185 of 15 December 1998, 54/220 of 22 December 1999, 55/197 of 20 December 2000 and 56/194 of 21 December 2001 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1999/46 of 28 July 1999 and 1999/63 of 30 July 1999, and taking note of Council resolution 2000/33 of 28 July 2000,

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"*Reaffirming* the importance of developing strategies at the national, subregional, regional and international levels that aim to prevent, mitigate and rehabilitate the damage caused by natural disasters that result from the El Niño phenomenon,

"*Welcoming* the efforts made by the Government of Ecuador in cooperation with the World Meteorological Organization and the inter-agency secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the announcement made regarding the January 2003 opening of the International Centre for the Study of the El Niño Phenomenon in Guayaquil, Ecuador,

"*Taking into account* the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002,

"1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;

"2. *Encourages* the Government of Ecuador, the World Meteorological Organization and the inter-agency secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to continue their joint efforts aimed at the completion of the process to establish the International Centre for the Study of the El Niño Phenomenon;

"3. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General and the relevant United Nations organs, funds and programmes, in particular those taking part in the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and encourages the international community, to adopt as appropriate, the necessary measures to support the establishment of the above-mentioned research centre at Guayaquil, Ecuador, and invites the international community to provide scientific, technical and financial assistance and cooperation for this purpose, as well as to strengthen, as appropriate, other centres devoted to studying the El Niño phenomenon;

"4. *Encourages* the Centre, once established, to strengthen its links with other relevant regional and global climate-study organizations, as well as with Internet information services, in order to ensure an effective and efficient use of the available resources;

"5. *Requests* the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction to ensure appropriate consideration of measures needed to address more effectively extreme meteorological and hydrologic events, like the El Niño phenomenon, in the process of the ten-year review of the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action;

"6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue the full implementation of its resolutions 52/200, 53/185, 54/220, 55/197 and 56/194 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1999/46, 1999/63 and 2000/33;

"7. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on the implementation of the present resolution, under the item entitled 'Environment and sustainable development'."

3. At the 40th meeting, on 4 December, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Jan Kára (Czech Republic), introduced a draft resolution entitled "International cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon" (A/C.2/57/L.54), which he submitted on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.16.

4. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.54 (see para. 14, draft resolution I).

5. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.54, draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.16 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

B. Draft resolutions A/C.2/57/L.21 and A/C.2/57/L.69

6. At the 20th meeting, on 30 October, the representative of Venezuela, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "International Strategy for Disaster Reduction" (A/C.2/57/L.21), which read:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Recalling* its resolutions 44/236 of 22 December 1989, 49/22 A of 2 December 1994, 49/22 B of 2ν December 1994, 53/185 of 15 December 1998, 54/219 of 22 December 1999 and 56/195 of 21 December 2001 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/63 of 30 July 1999, and taking note of Council resolution 2001/35 of 26 July 2001,

"*Emphasizing* the multisectoral, interdisciplinary and cross-cutting nature of natural disaster reduction, and stressing that continued interaction, cooperation and partnerships among the institutions concerned are considered essential to achieving jointly agreed objectives and priorities,

"*Expressing its deep concern* at the increasing number and scale of natural disasters, which have resulted in massive loss of life and long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences for vulnerable societies throughout the world, in particular in developing countries,

"*Recognizing* that disaster reduction is an important element that contributes to the achievement of sustainable development,

"*Recalling* that the annual observance of the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction is on the second Wednesday of October,

"*Reiterating* that, although natural disasters damage the social and economic infrastructure of all countries, the long-term consequences of natural disasters are especially severe for developing countries and hamper the achievement of their sustainable development,

"*Stressing* the need for Governments to continue to cooperate and coordinate their efforts in the field of natural disasters within the framework of action for the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, in line with their respective skills and capacities, from prevention to early warning, response, mitigation, rehabilitation and reconstruction, inter alia, through capacity-building at all levels,

"*Stressing also* the need for Governments to continue to cooperate and coordinate their efforts with the United Nations system, other international organizations, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and other partners, as appropriate, in order to ensure effective synergies in the field of natural disasters,

"*Recognizing* the urgent need to develop further and make use of the existing scientific and technical knowledge to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters, and emphasizing the need for developing countries to have access to technology so as to tackle natural disasters effectively,

"*Taking into account* the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, adopted by the Summit, which was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002, in particular relevant references in paragraph 13 of the Declaration as well as paragraph 35 of the Plan of Implementation,

"1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;

"2. *Requests* the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction to provide specific proposals, including a timetable and measurable targets, for the implementation of the actions agreed to by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in its Plan of Implementation on this matter, to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session;

"3. *Decides* to take a decision concerning the date of the final event marking the conclusion of the review of the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action, at its fifty-eighth session;

"4. *Requests* the inter-agency secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to coordinate, and report to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session on the progress of the ten-year review process of the Yokohama Strategy;

"5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to allocate adequate financial and administrative resources for the effective functioning of the inter-agency secretariat;

"6. *Calls upon* the international community to provide the necessary financial resources to the Trust Fund for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and to provide the adequate scientific, technical, human and other resources to ensure adequate support for the activities of the inter-agency secretariat and the Inter-Agency Task Force and its working groups;

"7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution under the item entitled 'Environment and sustainable development'."

7. At the 42nd meeting, on 10 December, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Jan Kára (Czech Republic), introduced a draft resolution entitled "International

Strategy for Disaster Reduction" (A/C.2/57/L.69), which he submitted on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.21.

8. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.69 (see para. 14, draft resolution II).

9. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.69, draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.21 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

C. Draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.22 and draft decision A/C.2/57/L.75

10. At the 20th meeting, on 30 October, the representative of Venezuela, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Natural disasters and vulnerability" (A/C.2/57/L.22), which read:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Noting* that the global environment continues to suffer and that, more specifically, the loss of biodiversity continues, fish stocks continue to be depleted, desertification claims more and more fertile land, adverse effects of climate change are already evident, natural disasters are more frequent and more devastating, as developing countries become more vulnerable, and air, water and marine pollution continues to rob millions of a decent life,

"*Taking into account* the various ways and forms in which all countries, in particular the more vulnerable developing countries, are being exposed to extreme weather events of global reach, such as the El Niño phenomenon,

"*Bearing in mind* that the devastating economic, social and environmental consequences of natural disasters fall disproportionately on poor countries and that the future impacts of extreme weather events will maintain this negative trend,

"*Taking into account* the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development adopted by the Summit, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002,

"1. *Welcomes* the adoption of the relevant provisions of the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development[1] and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in particular paragraph 35, which calls for the implementation of an integrated, inclusive, multi-hazard approach to addressing vulnerability, risk assessment and disaster management, including prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery, as an essential element of a safer world in the twenty-first century;

"2. *Urges* the international community to continue to address ways and means to reduce the adverse effects of extreme weather events and associated natural disasters through the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and encourages its Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction, particularly its working group on climate and natural disasters, to continue its work in this regard;

"3. *Encourages* the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the parties to the Kyoto Protocol to the Convention to continue to address the adverse effects of climate change, especially in those developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, and also encourages the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to continue to assess the adverse effects of climate change on the socio-economic and natural systems of developing countries;

"4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session on the implementation of the present resolution within its report under the sub-item entitled 'International Strategy for Disaster Reduction'."

11. At the 44th meeting, on 11 December, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Jan Kára (Czech Republic), introduced a draft decision (A/C.2/57/L.75), which he submitted following informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.22.

12. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft decision A/C.2/57/L.75 (see para. 15).

13. In the light of the adoption of draft decision A/C.2/57/L.75, draft resolution A/C.2/57/L.22 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

III. Recommendations of the Second Committee

14. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Draft resolution I
International cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 52/200 of 18 December 1997, 53/185 of 15 December 1998, 54/220 of 22 December 1999, 55/197 of 20 December 2000 and 56/194 of 21 December 2001 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1999/46 of 28 July 1999 and 1999/63 of 30 July 1999, and taking note of Council resolution 2000/33 of 28 July 2000,

Reaffirming the importance of developing strategies at the national, subregional, regional and international levels that aim to prevent, mitigate and repair the damage caused by natural disasters that result from the El Niño phenomenon,

Taking into account the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development[1] and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation,[2]

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[1] *Report of the World Conference on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[2] Ibid., resolution 2, annex.

Noting with interest the partnership initiatives voluntarily undertaken by some Governments, international organizations and major groups, and announced at the Summit,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;[3]

2. *Welcomes* the efforts undertaken by the Government of Ecuador, in cooperation with the World Meteorological Organization and the inter-agency secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, towards the establishment of the International Centre for the Study of the El Niño Phenomenon at Guayaquil, Ecuador, and the announcement made regarding its opening in January 2003, and encourages all parties to continue their joint efforts for the development of the Centre;

3. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General and the relevant funds, programmes and organizations of the United Nations system, in particular those taking part in the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and encourages the international community, to adopt, as appropriate, the necessary measures to support the establishment of the above-mentioned research Centre at Guayaquil, and invites the international community to provide scientific, technical and financial assistance and cooperation for this purpose, as well as to strengthen, as appropriate, other centres devoted to the study of the El Niño phenomenon;

4. *Encourages* the Centre, once established, to strengthen its links, as appropriate, with national meteorological and hydrologic services of the Latin American region, the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific, the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research and the International Research Institute for Climate Prediction, as well as with other relevant regional and global organizations that study climate, such as the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts, the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development, the Drought Monitoring Centre and the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research, and other relevant centres as appropriate, in order to ensure the effective and efficient use of the available resources;

5. *Invites* the Secretary-General, with the assistance of the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction, to ensure that measures needed to address more effectively extreme meteorological and hydrologic events like the El Niño phenomenon are considered appropriately in the 2004 review of the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action;[4]

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue the full implementation of its resolutions 52/200, 53/185, 54/220, 55/197 and 56/194 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1999/46, 1999/63 and 2000/33;

7. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on the implementation of the present resolution, under the item entitled "Environment and sustainable development".

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[3] A/57/189.

[4] A/CONF.172/9, resolution 1, annex I.

Draft resolution II
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 44/236 of 22 December 1989, 49/22 A of 2 December 1994, 49/22 B of 20 December 1994, 53/185 of 15 December 1998, 54/219 of 22 December 1999 and 56/195 of 21 December 2001 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/63 of 30 July 1999, and taking note of Council resolution 2001/35 of 26 July 2001,

Emphasizing the multisectoral, interdisciplinary and cross-cutting nature of natural disaster reduction, and stressing that continued interaction, cooperation and partnerships among the institutions concerned are considered essential to achieving jointly agreed objectives and priorities,

Expressing its deep concern at the increasing number and scale of natural disasters within recent years, which have resulted in massive loss of life and long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences for vulnerable societies throughout the world, in particular in developing countries,

Recognizing that disaster reduction, including reducing vulnerability to natural disasters, is an important element that contributes to the achievement of sustainable development,

Recalling that the annual observance of the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction is on the second Wednesday of October,

Recalling also the results, including the lessons learned, of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, outlined in the Geneva mandate on disaster reduction and the strategy document entitled "A safer world in the twenty-first century: risk and disaster reduction",[5]

Reiterating that, although natural disasters damage the social and economic infrastructure of all countries, the long-term consequences of natural disasters are especially severe for developing countries and hamper the achievement of their sustainable development,

Stressing the need for Governments to continue to cooperate and coordinate their efforts in the field of natural disasters, in line with their respective skills and capacities, from prevention to early warning, response, mitigation, rehabilitation and reconstruction, inter alia, through capacity-building at all levels, where appropriate within the framework of action for the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction,

Stressing also the need for Governments to continue to cooperate and coordinate their efforts with the United Nations system, other international organizations, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and other partners, as appropriate, in order to ensure effective synergies in the field of natural disasters,

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[5] Adopted at the programme forum on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, held at Geneva from 5 to 9 July 1999.

Recognizing the urgent need to develop further and make use of the existing scientific and technical knowledge to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters, and emphasizing the need for developing countries to have access to technology so as to tackle natural disasters effectively,

Recognizing also the need to continue to develop an understanding of, and to address, socio-economic activities that exacerbate the vulnerability of societies to natural disasters and to build and further strengthen community capacity to cope with disaster risks,

Taking into account the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development[6] and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation,[7]

Noting with interest the partnership initiatives voluntarily undertaken by some Governments, international organizations and major groups, and announced at the World Summit,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;[8]

2. *Welcomes* the memorandum of understanding signed between the inter-agency secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the United Nations Development Programme, and encourages the secretariat to pursue the establishment of similar arrangements with other international organizations in order to improve synergies and clarify respective roles;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in reporting to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, to provide specific proposals to Member States for the implementation of the actions on this matter agreed to by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in its Plan of Implementation;[7]

4. *Decides* to take a decision on how to conclude the review of the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action[9] at its fifty-eighth session;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General, with the assistance of the inter-agency secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, to plan and coordinate, in consultation with Governments and relevant organizations of the United Nations system, including international financial institutions, the 2004 review of the Yokohama Strategy and to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session in this regard;

6. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to allocate adequate financial and administrative resources, within existing resources, for the effective functioning of the inter-agency secretariat;

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[6] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August to 4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[7] Ibid., resolution 2, annex.

[8] A/57/190.

[9] A/CONF.172/9, resolution 1, annex I.

7. *Encourages* the international community to provide the necessary financial resources to the Trust Fund for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and to provide the necessary scientific, technical, human and other resources to ensure adequate support for the activities of the inter-agency secretariat and the Inter-Agency Task Force and its working groups;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution under the item entitled "Environment and sustainable development".

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15. The Second Committee also recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft decision:

Natural disasters and vulnerability

The General Assembly decides:

(a) To consider the issue of natural disasters and vulnerability at its fifty-eighth session under the sub-item entitled "International Strategy for Disaster Reduction" of the agenda item entitled "Environment and sustainable development";

(b) To request the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session on the negative impacts of extreme weather events and associated natural disasters on vulnerable countries, in particular developing countries, in a separate section of his report on the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.